

# AIR MEDICAL UPDATE

**Air Medical  
meeting held  
February 4<sup>th</sup>**

# MONTANA AIR MEDICAL SERVICES

- Alert – Kalispell, Fixed and Rotor
- \*Billings Clinic – Billings, Fixed
- Guardian Flight – Sidney, Fixed
- \*Help Flight – Billings, Fixed and Rotor
- \*St. Patrick's Lifeflight/NW Med Star – Missoula, Rotor and Fixed
- \*Life Flight Network – Butte & Sand Point, Rotor
- Spirit Lifeline – Dickinson, Rotor
- \*Mercy Flight – Great Falls, Fixed and Rotor

# MONTANA AIR MEDICAL SERVICES

- Montana Medical Transport – Helena, Fixed
- \*Stat Air – Glasgow, Fixed
- \*Summit Air Ambulance – Belgrade & Helena  
Fixed and Rotor
- Valley Med Flight – Williston - Fixed

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- Air to Ground “Tan” channel discussion
  - Law Enforcement has not been educated on this issue
  - Education needs to continue across the state since many do not attend RTAC or Symposium. Hand out more of the Field Trauma Decision Cards/Air Medical Guidelines.
  - Perhaps education can be done during EMS inspections, Trauma Symposium or possible Air Medical Summit
- Lack of communication flight team to flight team
  - Incoming flight team not talking to home flight team/Comm. Center. Ex) bring pt. to cath lab for STEMI etc...
  - <http://flightaware.com>
  - Mercy reminding incoming teams to please contact Comm. Center on tan channel and perform one fly-by around the landing pad first for ground safety.
  - Pilots need to be on helicopter-common except when in controlled airspace

# HELICOPTER SHOPPING

- “Helicopter shopping” refers to the practice of calling various operators until an operator agrees to take a flight assignment, without sharing with subsequent operators the fact that the flight was declined by the previously called operators or the reasons why.
  - For example, an EMS dispatch center might call an air ambulance operator for a transport, and the operator turns the flight down for some reason, e.g. weather conditions are not favorable for flight, aircraft capabilities, aircraft maintenance issues, etc. Subsequent calls are made to other air ambulance providers, each made without mentioning the previous refusals until an operator, unaware of the reasons for the previous refusals, and therefore, unaware of the complete situation, agrees to accept the flight assignment.
- The practice of “helicopter shopping” can lead to an unsafe condition in which an operator initiates a flight that they may have declined if they had been aware of all of the facts surrounding the assignment.

- When an Air Medical service turns down a flight, understand the reasons and possible ramifications:
  - Good article: [http://www.in.gov/dhs/files/helicopter\\_shopping.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dhs/files/helicopter_shopping.pdf)
  - Use one system such as Weather Turndown [www.weatherturndown.com](http://www.weatherturndown.com) to promote safety
  - A “helicopter is not a helicopter” just like “a nurse is not a nurse”. You may not be able to simply substitute one service for another. Think about “what is best for my patient”. Not all helicopters have the same capabilities.
- Service to assist small hospitals to arrange another flight if unable to take it. Close the communication loop by contacting hospital back, original flight service and giving updates etc...